# Social Media Standards

## Document summary

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| **Document owner** | Communication and Marketing Department (CMD) | | |
| **Approved by** | CMD | **Reviewed by** | |
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## Revision

**Review period:** These standards must be reviewed every five years.

| Version | Revision Type | Amendments | Approved by | Signed | Review date |
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## Purpose

The purpose of these standards is to ensure that UCT's Social Media presence is consistent, accessible (both to its audience and search engines, and across platforms), and understandable. The standards comprise best practice with regards to usability, and accessibility, alongside UCT-specific styles and practices.

**Please note:** This document must be read in conjunction with the Social Media Policy and Social Media Guidelines.

## Definitions

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| Appropriate Social Media Content | Social Media Content complying with the stipulations of this Policy |
| Digital Presence | Comprises Websites, Social Media sites and Accounts, including their Digital Content, and the Digital Content on UCT Web Applications, mobile apps, chatbots, and other internet-enabled products and services, etc., whether hosted internally or externally to UCT |
| Social Media | Includes all means of receiving, posting, or streaming Social Media Content online, or on digital and/or web-based platforms or applications including, but not limited to, blogs, digital journals or diaries, social networking, or affinity websites; web bulletin boards or chat rooms; as well as any other form of social networking site |
| Social Media Account | Any UCT profile and its contents on a Social Media platform, whether public or private, representing UCT or a UCT Entity, or a UCT staff or Student role (UCT Professional Account) |
| Social Media Account Manager | Any member of staff, any student or any registered third party who is formally tasked with managing and operating a UCT social media account or any aspect thereof; may also manage social media practitioners |
| Social Media Content | Without limitation, written; verbal; pictorial; photographic; video; and similar or associated content placed on UCT Social Media Platforms; includes direct messages and private posts |
| Social Media Platform | Any website or software platform or application that enables users to use Social Media including, but not limited to, Facebook; X; Instagram; LinkedIn; YouTube; TikTok; blogs; and online forums |
| Social Media Practitioners | Any person authorised to maintain Content on UCT Social Media platforms |
| Users | The audience of UCT's Social Media Accounts; the consumers of the content on such accounts |

## Applicable to

The standards are applicable to all UCT Social Media Content on UCT Social Media Accounts and sites. They must be followed and implemented by all Social Media Account Managers and Social Media Practitioners.

## Standards details

### 1. Social Media Accounts

1.1. Social Media Accounts must be clearly associated with UCT via their titles and/or information provided in account bios.
E.g.
"UCT Department of Biological Sciences" as account title

1.2. Social Media Crises

1.2.1. Account Managers and Practitioners must be alert to potential crises on Social Media Accounts and have a process in place to deal with them.

1.2.1.1. The process must include the following, as relevant:

1.2.1.1.1. Taking timely and transparent action to mitigate the crisis

1.2.1.1.2. Releasing a formal response to the issue

1.2.1.1.3. Publishing correct information to counter mis- or disinformation

1.2.1.1.4. Apologising for any mistakes that may have led to the issue

1.2.1.1.5. Implementing preventative measures to prevent the reoccurrence of a mistake

1.2.2. CMD and the relevant Account Owner must be promptly informed of a developing crisis.

1.3. Social Media Account security

1.3.1. No-one must retain access to Accounts they are no longer involved with.

**2. Social Media Account Manager and Practitioner Posts**

2.1. Information important to the UCT community and stakeholders must not be made available on Social Media Accounts and sites only, unless no other suitable platform exists.

**3. User Posts**

3.1. Ideally, requests for information should be addressed within 24 hours, excluding weekends and public holidays. If that timeframe is not feasible, a response should be provided within 72 hours.

3.1.1. If the Social Media Account is not intended for user engagement, this should be explicitly communicated and contact details must be provided.

3.1.2. The inbox of such an account must be disabled.

3.2. Account Managers and Practitioners must counter false or misleading information with facts.

3.3. Social Media Account Managers must report inappropriate posts that may pose reputational risk to UCT to their Account Owners as well as the Communication and Marketing Department (CMD).

**4. Inclusivity**

4.1. Social Media Content must use inclusive terminology and visuals to reflect societal and institutional diversity and support transformation objectives.

4.1.1. In support of the above, “they”, “theirs”, and “them” must be used as gender-neutral collective pronouns when referring to groups or individuals whose pronouns are not known.
E.g.
- The student left their test on the table.

**5. User-First**

5.1. All role players in the creation, management and editing of Social Media Content must strive to adhere to the User-First Principle. In particular:

5.1.1. UCT terminology and jargon that may not be understood by users must be avoided in public-facing content; if unavoidable, the necessary explanations must be provided.

**6. Accessibility**

As per the Digital Presence Policy, Social Media Content Managers and Practitioners must strive to make their content compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guide, version 2.0.

6.1. Visual elements and live streaming: see #7 below

**7. Media**

7.1. Images

7.1.1. Images must be assigned brief and descriptive alt text and captions where possible.

7.1.2. Information posted in image format must also be posted as plain text.

7.1.3. Images must not appear distorted, squashed, or stretched.

7.1.4. Colour contrast

7.1.4.1. On visual elements there must be sufficient contrast between text and background to ensure legibility.

7.2. Video, audio and live streaming

7.2.1. Content managers must strive to make video and audio content disability accessible. This can include:

7.2.1.1. Video captions for the hearing-impaired

7.2.1.2. Audio transcripts

7.2.1.3. Sign language interpreters at live-streamed or recorded events

7.2.2. When live streaming, multiple variations of stream quality must be provided to accommodate viewer bandwidth limitations.

7.2.3. Any music used must be royalty-free or pre-authorised.

7.2.4. Flashing elements must be avoided as they could lead to users having seizures.

## Related links

- Digital Presence Governance Framework (ratification process underway)
- Digital Presence Policy (ratification process underway)
- Digital Presence Standards
- Digital Presence Guidelines
- UCT Social Media Policy (ratification process underway)
- Social Media Guidelines
- UCT Inclusivity Policy for Sexual Orientation
- UCT Disability Policy
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0
- CMD Editorial Style Guide